

News For Members of PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS FOUNDATION

NUMBER 30--OCTOBER 1971

WE MOVE IN !

The long-awaited move was finally completed over the weekend of September 24-26, as the PHLF staff and workmen disassembled office furniture, collected files, boxed books, gathered together artifacts and, moved everything into our new offices in the restored Old Post Office in Allegheny Square from the Benedum-Trees Building downtown. Although several truckloads of books and artifacts had been sent over during the weeks prior to the final move, a huge amount remained. All day and evening Friday was devoted to moving from the downtown offices to the Old Post Office itself. Because the elevator was not working, it was necessary to spend Friday night bringing the heavy desks and other furniture up from the ground floor to the second floor offices by hand. On Sunday, staff members straightened up their offices, shelved books in the library, sorted artifacts, and cleaned things up in preparation for our first week at the "new" Old Post Office.



Thanks to the ingenuity and scaffolding of Henry Busse, Inc., our superb contractors, we were able to move our heavy office furniture more directly than by climbing stairs.

NEW ADDRESS & PHONE Effective immediately, our new address is: Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, The Old Post Office, Allegheny Square West, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15212, Telephone: 322-1204.

The first fall meeting of Landmark Associates will be held at The Old Post Office on November 4, 1971 at 8:00 p.m. We will have a tour of the building and we will discuss our organizational structure and our projects for the coming year. Now that we have a permanent home and now that the museum will be opening, we could develop some exciting projects in connection with the extraordinary year that lies before us. Refreshments will be served.

LANDMARK ASSOCIATES MEETING

LOST & FOUND Pair of women's glasses in an orange case were found at the old fire station in North Side after the auction on Saturday, October 2. For information please call 322-1204.

MUSEUM COMMITTEES APPOINTED

Our president, Mr. Arensberg, is pleased to announce the formation of several more advisory committees in addition to the House Committee in conjunction with the Old Post Office Museum.

Antiques Advisory Committee

Kermit Bixler
Mrs. George H. Dahlin
Mrs. Joseph B. Griffith
Mrs. William S. Reed

David Russell
Mrs. Roger Sutton
Kirk Wilson

Educational Advisory Committee

Mrs. Wilbur F. Alster
Mrs. Howard Bruschi
Mrs. E. Joseph Charny

Mrs. Louis Goldzer
Mrs. Alan Wohleber

Gift Store Advisory Committee

Mrs. E. J. Barnes
Mrs. James H. Childs, Jr.
Mrs. Samuel H. Golden

Mrs. Norman Lee
Mrs. Emil Limbach

Neighborhood Advisory Committee

Roy F. Bates
Mrs. Becky L. Coger
Mrs. Mary L. Daniel
Mrs. William E. Eichleay
Mrs. Joseph A. Ferree
Clifford H. Gates

Mrs. Ethel Hagler
Rev. John Long
David H. Miller
Miss M.G. Thompson
Mrs. Norman O. Young

Soon the committees will begin their work; if you would like to serve on a committee, please call Miss Zielinski at the office and volunteer your name. Everyone is welcome.

GIVE A PRESENT TO THE OLD POST OFFICE

At the request of a number of our members we are listing more special organizational, family, individual and memorial gifts for the Old Post Office. These are of moderate cost and can be given in the name of a family or to honor a person on a special occasion like a birthday, graduation or as a permanent memorial for a deceased relative or friend. All donations are tax deductible. For further information, contact our Executive Director, Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr. at 322-1204.

Individual small permanent lower gallery

lights (any number up to 22 @).....\$ 10 each

Restored antique brass light fixtures rescued from various mansions and houses in Allegheny:

One double sconce brass candle fixture

in main stair.....donated

Double sconce brass candle light.....\$ 25

Single brass globe fixture.....\$ 20

Sconce brass ornamented light in side stair.....\$ 20

Single sconce brass candle light.....\$ 15

Single sconce brass globe.....\$ 7

Restoration and installation of panelled

foyer doors.....\$ 50

Acquisition and preparation of new cherry
doors for main entrance to galleries.....\$850

Restoration of carved eagle wooden plaques
from Old Post Office lobby (any number
up to 4 @).....\$ 50 each

Restoration and installation of carved oak
egg-and-dart door to hallway leading off
main exhibit area.....\$ 50

Restoration and installation of pair of
Victorian panelled walnut doors from
Ricketson house leading off main gallery.....\$200

Restoration of plaster frescos on main gal-
lery columns (any number up to 7 @).....\$ 40 each

Restoration of original cast iron grills
around radiators in main gallery.....\$ 40

Restoration of mahogany handrail around
second floor balcony.....\$ 50

Restoration and installation of door lead-
ing to private area from main gallery.....\$ 20

Installation of contemporary round florescent
lights in main gallery (any number up to 10 @).....\$ 25 each

Painting oak doors on original balcony over-
looking main gallery (any number up to 4 @).....\$ 15 each

Restoration and installation of oak shutters
rescued from Allegheny mansions for inter-
ior windows overlooking galleries (any
number up to 3 pair @).....\$ 40 each pair

Restoration and installation of special
leaded glass window rescued from a demol-
ished Allegheny mansion for second floor
balcony hallway.....\$ 30

Restoration and installation of mahogany
doors rescued from Henry W. Oliver house
(any number up to 4 @).....\$ 50 each

Restoration and installation of oak doors
rescued from Henry W. Oliver house (any
number up to 3 @).....\$ 30 each

Restoration, installation, and painting of
door with glass and quattrocento panels.....\$ 12

Restoration, installation, and painting of
door with leaded glass quatrefoil detailing.....\$ 75

Restoration, installation, and painting of
door with frosted glass and elegant etched
lettering.....\$ 35

Installation of two leaded glass panels from
Ridge Avenue mansion on second floor balcony.....\$ 10 each

Variety of Victorian plants for lobby area
 (any number @).....\$ 10 each

Special gallery lights (any number up to 100 @).....\$ 20 each

Draperies and shades for galleries' windows
 (any number up to 12 @).....\$ 75 each

Installation of one track flourescent light-
 ing to illuminate old brick wall on eastern
 side of lower gallery.....\$125

Installation of two cast iron gates on second
 floor balcony to be made from wrought iron
 fencing from two Old Allegheny houses
 (select one or two @).....\$250 each

Installation of large windows from former public
 post office area on second floor balcony over-
 looking main gallery (any number up to 5 @).....\$ 40 each

Antique punch bowl.....\$250

Coffee and tea urns.....\$120

Projection equipment.....\$750

Tape recorder.....\$200

Restoring and installing old counters from
 post office for museum shop.....\$150

Restoring and installing old writing desk
 for admissions area.....\$100

RECENT GRANTS

We are pleased to announce receipt of three significant grants from private individuals and foundations. The trustees of the Anne and George L. Clapp Charitable Trust allocated a grant of \$5,000 to our general programs. Last year the same sum was donated to us, and we applied it to appointing a staff architect who could develop design plans for properties that we are restoring and who would render design services to the Birmingham community. Our appointee, Ellis Schmidlapp, will now also be responsible for exhibit designs in the museum. This year the funds will be utilized for developmental work at the Old Post Office and for general operations.

Two anonymous gifts arrived several weeks ago in the amount of \$6,000 each to be applied to general operations. These two unrestricted gifts are of immeasurable importance because they enable us to fund our staff and on-going programs.

We are also pleased to announce recent donations to our general funds from Equitable Gas Company, Westinghouse Learning Corporation, Heppenstall Company Charitable Trust, Women's Club of Forest Hills, Martha Edwards Lazear Fund, Richard L. Hillman Fund, and the Ernest and Cynthia Calhoun Fund.

A number of private individuals have contributed to our general funds and to underwrite our first exhibition at the Old Post Office. These will be listed in a later newsletter.

To all of you who enable us to keep things going, many, many thanks.

We had a beautiful day in early October for our second artifact auction at the old fire house in North Side, and 124 people paid \$1 each to become bidders and another 40 or 50 gathered as spectators. Prices were not bid up as high at this auction as they were at the first one, but we still grossed nearly \$1,700 plus \$65 on food sales and \$54 on publications. We still have many items remaining and we are considering a one-day sale with all remaining items tagged as to price. Further details will be announced soon.

VAN TRUMP RAGES AGAINST MORE ARCHITECTURAL RAVAGES

From hardware to erotica, from a shop to a movie house to a palace and back to the converted shop once more--many--and yet rather limited--are the places for displaying the images of the cinematograph.

The latest invitation of the motion picture house in Pittsburgh resulted in the complete ruination of what was left of the finest remaining Victorian commercial facade in the city. The handsome cast-iron facade of the Fort Pitt Hardware Company with its elegant black and gold shop-signs had been for many years the only remaining note of grace in the increasing tawdriness of Liberty Avenue. We publicly commended it three years ago.

Last year the Hardware Company moved out and the Victorian shell was taken over by a new "adult" movie house. We are not Victorian, and we have nothing against the new cinematic freedom, but we do object to having a handsome and unique architectural artifact ravaged in the process.



The new house is called the Liberty Theater and ironically reminds us of old East Liberty's pride, The Liberty Theater. Designed by H. H. Kennedy and Henry Hornbostel and opened in 1915, it was a great advance on the converted-shop nickelodeons. Now that the Penn Theater, the great movie palace, is to be opened as a symphony hall--an admirable transformation--the metamorphosis of the hardware store into a place for "explicitly erotic, adult action" images is a dreary portent. "Oh Liberty, what crimes...?"

James D. Van Trump

PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS FOUNDATION PICKS NAMES

James W. Knox, Executive Director of the Allegheny County Housing Authority, asked us to submit recommendations for names of several county public and elderly housing projects. Two years ago we named the highrise for the elderly located in Braddock "The General Braddock Towers". We submitted the following new recommendations:

TARENTUM

The Rachel Carson Apartments (Rachel Carson was from Springdale)
The Felix Negley Apartments (this man settled in the area before 1800, and was one of the earliest Negleys in Allegheny County.)
An alternate name here would be the Philip Burtner Apartments, because Burtner was an early settler in the area and recently the stone house that he built in Natrona Heights was saved by the local people.

WILKINSBURG

The William Wilkins Apartments (the borough was named after him.)

ROSS TOWNSHIP

The James Ross Apartments (Ross Township was named after James Ross, an important early Allegheny County political leader.)

TURTLE CREEK

The John Frazier Apartments (Frazier built a cabin in 1753 at the confluence of Turtle Creek and the Monongahela River; many travelers are reputed to have stopped and have lodging including George Washington who stayed for a few days in November 1753.)

We appreciate the County Housing Authority's interest in naming buildings after local historic persons.

Recently we were contacted by the West End-Elliott Citizens' Council when they became alarmed over learning that the city had proposed to demolish the band shelter-pavilion in West End Park. At their request we examined the pavilion and wrote the Mayor that "it appeared to us to be in very good condition and quite a lovely architectural ingredient in the park. There are very few such pavilions left in the city and since this one is sturdily built of brick and is one of the best we have, we urge that the city reconsider the decision to demolish it, if such a decision has been made, and permit it to stand as both an historic and functional ornament in this very pleasant green area."

Don Riggs at WIIC-TV took up the cry to save the pavilion and soon he had enlisted one Gus Barbush, as a volunteer contractor; Mr. Riggs wrote to Mayor Flaherty as follows: Gus has offered to restore the bandstand completely including customstained green cedar shakes and all necessary repairs to the sheathing. He'll even buy the paint for the trim. The West End Citizens Council will quickly provide the painters. Gus is a fine, altruistic man and has been in this country about thirty years. From what I found out he genuinely wants to do this. Publicity? Sure, we'll give him some! Not only that, but I'll guarantee free ice cream for the kids and a dandy concert by one of our city's bands, courtesy WIIC Action Line. All Gus wants is permission from the city to do it; his crew is available next week so it will have to be right now. Now that's action from Action Line. However, when Gus arrived to begin the work, His Honor had him ejected from the property.

NORTH SHORE STUDY COMPLETED
FOR URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Several months ago we proposed to the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh that we be appointed under contract to research and write a "Biography of the North Shore Urban Renewal Area." This area runs parallel to the Allegheny River between the river and the railroad and from the stadium to the Heinz plant. URA is undertaking a major renewal study of that area and we felt that it would be prudent for them to be informed not only about the development of this strategic section of the city, but also about the feelings Pittsburghers have about it, the roots that our people have put down there. Thereby URA could build upon what has gone before rather than annihilate it and start afresh.

URA quickly agreed and we were given 60 days in which to prepare a study and find useful illustrative material. This we did and submitted a sixty-eight page report including a list of specific recommendations about the planning for the area, and we are pleased to say that not only has URA been enthusiastic about our report, but that under the leadership of William Farkas, the Director, and Jan Krygowski, the planner in charge of this project, URA has developed a most interesting plan in keeping with the general mixed-use character that the area has always had.

We look forward to reviewing the plan in detail when it is completely formulated, and we want to commend URA for its enlightened approach to the problem of how to truly RENEW an area. This is our third such study for URA, and we feel that this relationship is unprecedented in the nation. It would be a fruitful one for other cities to follow.



Our walking tour in Elizabeth in July attracted a group of about 80 members and 40 residents of the area. Here the group views one of the oldest buildings in the area while the town's historian describes its story.

Recently the Port Authority of Allegheny County contacted us for clearance for the Skybus and Patway systems as currently planned. The recently enacted Environmental Act as well as executive promulgations require that consideration be given to landmarks and environmental matters in the planning of public transit. We studied the proposal seriously and although we had some concern over the general environmental impact of the Skybus versus the existing trolleys, we felt that we should limit our consideration to actual landmarks. Those vitally affected by the system include the Smithfield Street Bridge, the old South Hills trolley, tunnel, the Duquesne Heights incline, and the rotunda of the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. Upon being assured that the system will in no way adversely affect these landmarks, we have forwarded to Harrisburg and Washington our consent.

LOST AMERICA

A new book has just been issued by Pyne Press that contains photographs of many splendid buildings, that have recently been demolished in the United States from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. This beautiful volume contains photographs of several of Pittsburgh's buildings including the Henry W. Oliver house and the Second City Hall. We have acquired some of these books and have them available at a member's price of \$15.95. It contains 300 large photographs, 256 pages and measures 9" x 11".

UNUSUAL GIFT WRAP

Livery stables, three and one-half day railway trips from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, and the world's largest stogie factory at Liberty Avenue and 12th Street, are a few of the old Pittsburgh advertisements depicted on gift wrap now available from the Foundation. This unique wrap is ideal for those special gifts and will be of interest to everyone. 29 1/2" x 22 1/2" in size, they are available in two sheets, one in black ink and the other in red, for 50¢.

To: Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
900 Benedum-Trees Building
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222

Please send me _____ packets of Pittsburgh gift wrap, two sheets per packet, at the price of 50¢ per packet.

Please send me _____ copies of Lost America @ \$15.95 each.

Total of my order.....\$ _____

6% Pennsylvania sales tax.....\$ _____

Postage & handling.....\$ 25¢

Total.....\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

PH
LF
PITTSBURGH HISTORY
& LANDMARKS FOUNDATION
THE OLD POST OFFICE
ALLEGHENY SQUARE WEST
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15212
412/322-1204

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Permit No. 598

*Landmark Associates To Meet
At Old Post Office
November 4, 1971--8:00 P.M.*